



# LUTHERAN EDUCATION

A Journal of the Faculty of Concordia University, River Forest

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# Lutheran Education

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*by Ross Stueber*

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## Lifting Our Gaze: Lessons from Abroad

One of the crucial functions of a journal like *Lutheran Education* is to offer us the opportunity to lift our gaze from the all-consuming task in front of us, so we might see new perspectives on ministry or see our current perspectives within a broader context. Sometimes this purpose can be accomplished by turning our eyes from the present to the past. As historian George Marsden reminded us at the beginning of the current volume, a crucial task of the historian is "to help us notice things in the present that are peculiar. By looking at ourselves in the perspective of past societies, we notice things that we take for granted about ourselves but which a visitor from another age would find very peculiar" (Sept/Oct, p. 4).

Both sides of the equation represented in the term "Lutheran education" are well served by recognizing the past as a resource rich in insight. For those of us in education, historical awareness provides much needed balance as we consider a seemingly unending cycle of innovations, many short lived and soon replaced with the next "new thing." So, too, in matters of faith: a sense of history offers a remedy for what Mark Noll has called "the dreadful amnesia that cripples nearly all Christian faith in America" (*First Things*, Feb. 1992).

In a parallel way, this issue of *Lutheran Education* encourages us to add depth to our understanding of the subject by considering other geographical contexts. The more the demographics of Lutheran education change—in many American Lutheran schools, it is foolish to assume that a majority of children share a foundation in Lutheran doctrine and worship, much less a common northern European cultural heritage—the more our schools need to think in new ways in order to minister effectively to those God brings within their doors. The experiences of those ministering in schools outside of the United States provide an important lens through which Lutheran educators in America may discover fresh insights and new possibilities for ministry.

In the articles that follow, Charles and Jonathan Laabs reflect on the rich resource available to Lutheran educators through international collaboration. Adrienne Jericho and Roger Hunter then discuss the Lutheran schools of Australia and of Papua New Guinea. The questions they address are central to Lutheran schools everywhere: What does it mean to be a *Lutheran* school? How is the identity of different Lutheran schools maintained and made clear to its various constituencies (students, parents, teachers, the surrounding community)? How, for example, do the ways in which the school is staffed, funded, and promoted relate to questions of Lutheran identity?

It is my hope that looking at how those in Lutheran education in various international contexts have answered these and similar questions might provide insight for each of us, whatever our location. †



## International Dimensions of Lutheran Education

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**L**utheran education has impacted God's Church for many years. With a Biblical basis, Lutheran education was founded for edification, mission, and life-training purposes. "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, . . . teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you" (Matt. 28:19). "Teach me thy paths" (Ps. 25:4). "I will instruct you in the good and the right way" (1 Sam. 12:23). The proclamation of Jesus was very clear: "Believe and be saved, and spread the Word."

The Reformation strengthened the purpose of Lutheran education. Martin Luther addressed the whole problem of common education and the need for good schools for both boys and girls. He and other reformers encouraged the Church to secure able, educated ministers. Luther supported good schools as God's means to educate men and women for service to society.

Lutheran schools in America appeared as soon as the European immigrants settled, many educational buildings being erected prior to church construction. Parents were eager for their children to become familiar with Biblical truths and Lutheran doctrine and learn to love the true treasure of the Gospel message. The proclamation of bringing Christ to all nations was an

integral part of Lutheran school curricula for over a century.

By the mid-nineteenth century, Lutheran schools were characterized by daily instruction in God's Word—Bible stories and catechetical teachings, singing of Christian hymns, memory work in order to retain life-long precious Bible passages, stories of missionaries in far-away lands, as well as the basic "reading, writing, and arithmetic." Through the years the scope of Lutheran education included such part-time agencies as Sunday School, Vacation Bible School, and Weekday school. Lutheran high schools and Christian colleges and universities developed to continue teaching and training in the Word. Building a sensitivity to and a consciousness for the poor and needy in the United States as well as in foreign mission fields also became an integral part of the Lutheran school curriculum.

The general outcomes of Lutheran schools were intended to help children and adults meet Jesus "face to face," to bring the joy of the salvation message to all people, to learn and appreciate the singing of praises to God, and to become "children of God" to the fullest on this earth with a longing of heavenly bliss in the future.

### **Global Dimensions**

In recent decades society has moved rapidly from a segmented world with minimum contact between and among the continents of the globe to a shrinking

world with greater means of travel and communication. In the past, the Church had depended primarily upon existing literature, radio, and occasional travel to far-distant countries in order to become more aware of God's mission directives and the fulfillment of His outreach command. Now the new millennium is characterized by fast jet-travel, Internet and e-mail communication, efficient phone service, affordable foreign travel, and various student and teacher exchange activities.

As this communication and more frequent travel increase and expand throughout the world, individuals as well as organizations within the Church are becoming better acquainted with the various mission fields, particularly (for purposes of this article) the Lutheran schools and other educational programming. American visitors to these distant locations and on-site professional church-work experiences are helping to replace peoples' vague notions and general impressions of these far-distant institutions with clearer and more specific observations and descriptions.

Thus, the above factors cause certain conclusions to be drawn about the commonalities of Lutheran schools throughout the world: single purpose and mission; identical Bible-centered instruction; oneness of mission proclamation; same type of, and need for, teacher training; role and status of the Lutheran teacher; similar staff

development programs, funding, financing, and support; and many common curricular involvements, content, and activities.

One could then conclude that the above rationale would create an impetus for a common thrust and effort, i.e. a greater networking among *all* Lutheran educators of the world with the intent of creating a higher degree of unification and mutual support. If such a convergence of shared mission, common goals, and collaborative spirit were to exist, one could only imagine the outcomes.

What could be done to improve the quantity and quality of Lutheran teachers and administrators? How much more prepared for ministry in *all* parts of the world could Lutheran educators become? What role would Lutheran schools play in meeting the growing opportunities for evangelism evident in areas of the world such as Africa, Asia, and Latin America, where growth in Christianity between now and 2025 is expected to accelerate at rates unknown in the United States? How much better equipped would church bodies be to meet the rapidly growing challenges and tremendous new possibilities attached to the changing “face” of the American population

expected in the next 50 years, especially with respect to ethnic and cultural diversity?

Lutheran educators have very few opportunities during their ministries to experience firsthand the many ways in which Christian teaching and learning impacts the lives of young people in settings other than their own. If one is fortunate, service in a variety of

[There is a need for] greater networking among *all* Lutheran educators of the world with the intent of creating a higher degree of unification and mutual support. If such a convergence of shared mission, common goals, and collaborative spirit were to exist, one could only imagine the outcomes.

communities may become possible over time. However, interaction with individuals from other countries, increasing access to information via the Internet and television, and exposure to diverse educational circumstances at conferences or

through college courses must usually suffice. Educators often don't understand enough about international Lutheran education because they lack meaningful personal experiences.

### **The Australian Experience**

A unique opportunity to participate in an event that explored many of the above questions and provided firsthand personal exposure to Lutheran education in another country was made available in September of 1999. Sponsored by the

Lutheran Education Association, the “Lutheran Education in Australia” tour involved nine educators from several U.S. Lutheran school settings in the inaugural Australian Conference on Lutheran Education, held at the Gold Coast, Queensland. Participation in the conference was supplemented with school visits in three Australian locations, interaction with Australian Lutheran educators, and attendance at “supporting conferences.”

In sponsoring its first national Lutheran conference under the theme “From Slabhut to Cyberspace,” the Board for Lutheran Schools in Australia set out to produce a charter for Lutheran education into the next millennium by:

- preserving the values derived from Australian Lutheran education tradition;
- affirming present strengths of Lutheran education and addressing areas of concern;
- committing to develop a vision for Australian Lutheran education into the next millennium;

In his opening speech, the Honorable Sir William Deane, Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia, summed up the intent of the conference by discussing the value of “schools in which the development of the whole student—intellectually, emotionally, spiritually—and emphasis on the Christian mission of outreach remain central tenets of the philosophy of

education.” He asserted that “it is essential for all schools, especially those in the Christian tradition, never to lose sight of those essential values.” Through their three thematic strands—Appreciating the Past, Assessing the Present, and Approaching the Future—conference planners used speakers, worship, and participant interaction to carry forward their objectives and to focus on the implications for Lutheran education in the future.

For the nine American Lutheran educators on the tour—and some 25 other international visitors who had gathered for the event—it was an eye-opening experience. One was led to observe the extent to which several systems of Lutheran education had so many things in common. Shared mission, heritage and tradition, the need for leadership, concern for addressing issues of diversity, and the desire to plan for the future were just several of many noteworthy similarities. Questions regarding Lutheran education in other countries were raised by both Australian and international participants. Overall, appreciation for the past, present, and future of Lutheran education—and especially its pastors and teachers—was prevalent and shared by most of the 450 individuals involved in the conference.

To provide a more formal approach to discussing topics and issues related to international Lutheran education, an “International Leaders Day” was planned at the conclusion of the conference.



## *International Dimensions of Lutheran Education*

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Twenty-eight school leaders from five countries (Australia, Canada, Indonesia, Papua New Guinea, and the United States) and representing six Lutheran church bodies met to share information, discuss topics of interest and concern, and raise questions requiring further attention. Among the topics that emerged as areas of concern for all were teacher shortage, perception of mission, teacher exchange, curriculum, funding, and networking. Interest in addressing the issues collaboratively was shared, but a strategy for doing so has not been developed to date.

What was evident in each Australian experience was the interest generated in moving ahead with a united Lutheran education agenda. It also became clear how relatively little each international participant knows about fellow Lutheran educators from other countries and the education systems they represent. Identifying the countries in which Lutheran schools are operated was itself a challenge. After compiling a list of some 20, it was acknowledged that further investigation would need to be done. No individual present had a complete picture of where and how Lutheran education exists around the world. Collectively, the effort to establish such a list would be possible.

### **A New Tradition**

Personal involvement in conferences such as the one in Australia is only one of the ways in which Lutheran educators

can grow in their understanding of, and appreciation for, international Lutheran education. Growing numbers of new opportunities are now available to carry out the Great Commission through Lutheran education both at home and abroad. Traditional mission emphases in schools, Sunday schools, and congregations have opened the minds and hearts of most Lutherans in several church bodies through the decades. Is it time to meld together that natural mission orientation, the strong tradition of Lutheran education in the United States, and the rich experiences and opportunities offered *in* and *about* other parts of the world?

Following are some suggested directions to be explored in future years for the purpose of creating a “new tradition” of Lutheran education defined by terms that are international in scope. With the Scriptural and doctrinal foundations of Lutheran education firmly in place, new dimensions of consideration for developing Lutheran schools, training Lutheran educators, and supporting education initiatives must be explored that take into account a changing and growing world. Activities and programs designed *by*, *for*, and *with* Lutheran educators in *all* parts of the world should be given priority.

### ***International Awareness in Lutheran Education***

Educators in Lutheran schools have always appreciated the need for making

students aware of the events, people, and the history of world cultures and places. Today, it is easier than ever to “bring the world to the school.” Technology has allowed access to immediate and accurate sources of information from around the globe. Students growing up in a variety of cultures are mixed into the same classrooms. Travel experiences allow for meaningful interchange of experiences and observations. Teachers should take full advantage of every opportunity to utilize these resources and make them a focal point of teaching and learning.

#### ***International Lutheran educators***

Hundreds of educators have made the decision to teach in international settings as their full-time profession. In recent decades, such positions have been more widely available for Lutheran educators in schools around the world. Schools that have based their mission on “bringing Christ to the nations” desire to have faculties who are trained in the Lutheran tradition. Such opportunities are more abundant than ever. Many additional educators are being sought. Those who have served in such capacities

have generally found their experiences to be enriching and rewarding.

#### ***International experiences for Lutheran educators***

The American educators who participated in the conferences and visits in Australia appreciate the benefits of their experiences. It was, in most cases,

the first time they had encountered schools and educators in other international contexts. Though they had heard about the people and education systems before, there was nothing like their personally getting involved.

A growing number of experiences for

Lutheran educators abroad have been made available in recent years. Without committing to full-time teaching in an international setting, educators can select from a variety of short-term and long-term international experiences:

- volunteer teaching opportunities in the summer,
- Lutheran educator tours,
- one-year teacher exchanges,
- international conferences and workshops.

God’s command to “Go into all the world” has once again come alive as Lutherans recognize the numerous valuable opportunities to share the Gospel through schools. To be totally effective, the impact that Lutheran education is making in all parts of the world must be fully understood.

## *International Dimensions of Lutheran Education*

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### ***International experiences for students***

Many schools, especially at the high school level, already have in place international travel and study opportunities for their students. Extended study abroad has also been an option for most college students. Lutheran education students have recently been given opportunities to do their student teaching in international settings. In some cases, such experiences have led to full-time ministry abroad. In *all* cases, those students have entered their teaching ministries with a new attitude about everything they do. Their international experiences have changed or reinforced their perceptions and have equipped them to pass on to their students a richer dimension of understanding about the world as a whole.

### ***International events bringing together Lutheran educators***

From the experiences of the Australian Conference on Lutheran Education and the past three Lutheran Education Association Convocations come an important lesson: Lutheran educators from around the world need to get together. When these types of conferences happen, additional emphasis must be placed on the international context. The meeting of international Lutheran education leaders must be replicated every few years and moved to

several parts of the world. When physical presence is not possible, the Internet and other forms of technology should be employed. Listservs have already been found to be invaluable tools for ongoing interaction among Lutheran educators worldwide. Professional growth, sharing of ideas, and ministry to one another are all important outcomes of these initiatives.

God's command to "Go into all the world" has once again come alive as Lutherans recognize the numerous valuable opportunities to share the Gospel through schools. To be totally effective, the impact that Lutheran education is making in all parts of the world must be fully understood. Lutheran educators worldwide must become strategic in utilizing all resources available to carry out their mission. International experiences for students and teachers alike must continue to grow, and an understanding of what's happening in the rest of the world must enter the classroom. Most importantly, an attitude and climate of openness and collaboration must be at the base of future international initiatives.†

Further information about anything referenced in the above article is available by contacting the LEA office at 708-209-3343 or [lea@crf.cuis.edu](mailto:lea@crf.cuis.edu).

## Lutheran Schools in Australia: A Changing Role for Changing Times

*Adrienne Jericho has served Lutheran schools in Australia for 31 years as teacher, principal, and now, as the National Director for Lutheran Schools. In this capacity he represents Lutheran schools to the Lutheran Church of Australia, the Australian government, and other national educational bodies. A graduate of the University of Adelaide, he also holds a Master of Arts (EdAdmin) from Concordia University, Irvine, CA.*

***B**e it resolved that Synod adopt the following vision statement:*

*The mission of the LCA [Lutheran Church of Australia] is to share the love of God in Christ with the world. Lutheran schools provide the church with many opportunities to make contact with the people of local communities and to respond to their physical and spiritual need, and so to both demonstrate and declare the gracious love of God. Congregations and schools are encouraged to be more intentional, diligent, sensitive, and flexible in responding to these mission opportunities.*

The above resolution, which will be tabled at the General Convention of the Lutheran Church of Australia in July 2000, is being sponsored not only by the Board for Lutheran Schools but also by the College of Presidents and Home Mission Department. This collaborative initiative indicates clearly the role and significance of Lutheran schools in Australia as a new century begins. Lutheran schools are seen as a major focus of the Church's mission to the people of Australia and this resolution clarifies and articulates this



emerging role.

However, Australian Lutheran schools have had a varied and at times uneasy relationship with their Church. Whilst in the early years of the Church they were clearly regarded as its nurseries, as schools attract students and families from beyond the supporting congregations, attitudes have changed. There has been in some places and at various times misunderstanding, neglect, ambivalence and even fear of the schools of the Church.

### **Lutheran Schooling Comes to Australia**

Lutheran schooling in Australia dates back almost to the time of the initial European settlement of the country in 1788. The first German settlers arrived in South Australia in November 1838 for religious reasons and within six months there was a Lutheran school. This school operated in the quickly constructed wattle and daub (mud) church building and offered education for the immigrants' children. The goals of this schooling were the transmission and preservation of both the faith and the German culture.

German settlement spread out regionally across the country, and Lutheran schools invariably appeared alongside the local church building. Again it was the same rationale—valuing of education and valuing of the faith. It has been estimated that by 1900 there were probably well over 100 Lutheran

schools in Australia. By comparison today there are 78.

World War I was disastrous for Lutheran schools. Because so much of the Lutheran culture and activities, including worship, church publications and the schools, were still in the German language, Lutheran schools in South Australia were closed down by an Act of Parliament. Many did not re-open. In other states there were other less draconian legislative restrictions placed upon Lutheran schools (e.g., requiring all instruction to be in the English language, intrusive inspections). In Queensland, World War I spelled the end of Lutheran schools—there was no longer the will nor the resources. In post war South Australia there was still the interest, but resources made the going tough.

In many ways the Australian Lutheran school movement never recovered from these enforced closures and other restrictions. A growing public school system after 1870 compounded the dropping off of interest in maintaining and developing Lutheran schools. There was certainly no financial assistance from the government for non-public schools in the first half of the twentieth century. In these circumstances, the parochial school was often beyond the means of people and congregation. Lutheran schools for much of the first two-thirds of the last century were thus restricted to a small number of enthusiastic congregations. There were just two high schools up until 1946 when

World War II petrol restrictions were the catalyst for establishing another two in Queensland.

### **The Expansion Phase**

Significant growth in Australian Lutheran schools has occurred since the early 1970s. In 1966 there were 29 schools (23 elementary and six high schools) educating 3,592 students. All but six of these schools were in rural areas. These schools were clearly still about nurture of the faithful as they prepared children for service in church and family. The high schools were often judged by how many graduates went onto the seminary. Today there are 78 schools educating almost 25,000 students primarily in urban areas. Projections indicate there will be 30,000 students in 90 schools by 2004. In addition, there are 28 early childhood centers caring for and providing education for almost 2000 children. These are kindergartens, preschools, and various forms of child care centres. The face of Lutheran schooling in Australia has changed quite dramatically.

The growth in the last three decades of the twentieth century has been influenced by the following factors:

- a general interest in alternatives to public schooling arising out of the weakening of the fabric of society—a by-product of the social revolution of the 1960s;
- the availability of government funding;
- an increasing desire by congregations to be relevant in ministry to their local community;
- the existence of a few key people in the Lutheran Church with a passion and vision for Lutheran schooling who became effective advocates for the cause.

The changing shape of Lutheran schooling in Australia made it difficult for a philosophical base, which emphasized the nurture of the faith of congregational members, to adapt to the new challenges and issues—especially as they served large numbers of non-Lutheran Christians and the unchurched.

A significant feature of this growth was that it was locally generated—it was not centrally imposed by the central Church office embarking on a schools mission policy.

This growth occurred at all levels of education—early childhood, elementary, and high schools. It began initially in areas without a strong Lutheran presence, with schools emerging in the 1980s in areas of strong Lutheran concentration. Too often the growth of schools was such that congregations could not keep pace with understanding and support, and were almost intimidated. Not infrequently a division

## *Lutheran Schools in Australia*

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between the local congregation and school emerged.

The philosophical basis for Lutheran schooling in Australia had been heavily influenced by resources and personnel from the LCMS. There have been close contacts with LCMS school leaders, and in the 1970s a number of LCMS teachers responded to the challenge to teach in Lutheran schools in Australia. The changing shape of Lutheran schooling in Australia made it difficult for a philosophical base, which emphasized the nurture of the faith of congregational members, to adapt to the new challenges and issues—especially as they served large numbers of non-Lutheran Christians and the unchurched.

### **Demographic Information about the Contemporary Lutheran School**

Whilst about 250,000 Australians described themselves as Lutheran in the 1996 Commonwealth Census, a little under 100,000 are categorized by congregations as baptized members. On the other hand, over 27,000 children and young people daily attend a Lutheran school or early childhood agency. About 30% of these are Lutheran, with the remaining enrollment being fairly equally divided between children from other-than-Lutheran practicing Christian homes and children from homes with no real exposure or commitment to the Gospel. In some schools, Lutheran enrollment is as low as 5%, with the highest being 85%. However, the actual

number of Lutheran students attending a Lutheran school today is significantly higher than it was ten years ago—a rare growth feat for the LCA.

Today about 1,850 educators serve in Lutheran schools; of these 85% of elementary and 48% of high school teachers are Lutheran. A minority of these are graduates from the church's tertiary institution, which has not been able to keep up with the supply of teachers, especially at the high school level.

Lutheran school enrollments have an annual growth rate of 4%, and they are growing in traditionally non-Lutheran areas such as Queensland, Sydney, and Western Australia—some of Australia's fastest growing areas. This stands the LCA in good stead for the future, giving it a profile and presence in these areas that it would not otherwise have. The 1997 National Church Life Survey in Australia indicated that of those over 15 who attend a Lutheran church, 70% were over 40. The LCA has generally not been effective in attracting and keeping young people. These demographics underline the significance of schools for the LCA.

### **What Does It Mean To Be A Lutheran School?**

As people beyond the Lutheran congregation enrolled in Lutheran schools, the question was raised as to the minimum number of Lutheran students required to keep a school "Lutheran."

Was it 50% or 30% or what? Today we do not focus on the nature of student enrollments in discussing the identity of the Lutheran school. The statement *The LCA and Its Schools* defines a Lutheran school as one “in which the gospel of Jesus Christ informs all learning and teaching, all human relationships, and all activities.” The gospel will be able to do its work if it is proclaimed and lived out. Thus in defining the identity of the Lutheran school the emphasis therefore belongs on staff. *The LCA and Its Schools* statement recognizes this by requiring schools to appoint staff “with skilled and registered educators who are able to uphold the teachings of the church and model the Christian lifestyle. In the first instance it seeks to use the services of active members of the church. Beyond that, the church seeks to staff its schools with people who are active Christians from other denominations willing to uphold the Lutheran teaching of the school.”

The rapid expansion of Lutheran schools has challenged the ability of Lutheran schools to achieve this. Whilst the Church requires all who teach

Christian Studies or occupy leadership positions to complete the Graduate Diploma of Theology in Education from Luther Seminary, less than three quarters of those who are required to complete it have done so. A small number of teachers enter Lutheran schools through undertaking this course full time, whilst most others complete it by distance education.

Consequently, a large number of staff enter Lutheran schools without any formal theological qualifications. The Church requires such staff to complete a Theological Orientation Program for

Staff, a 20-hour introduction to Lutheran theology and how it informs Lutheran schooling.

To support staff and assist the school in focusing on its mission, the school pastor

plays a significant role. Most high schools have a pastor full time on staff, and elementary schools work closely with their congregational pastor.

### **What Is Unique About Australian Lutheran Schools?**

- **Mission**

An important feature of Australian Lutheran schools, with a large

The statement *The LCA and Its Schools* defines a Lutheran school as one “in which the gospel of Jesus Christ informs all learning and teaching, all human relationships, and all activities.” The gospel will be able to do its work if it is proclaimed and lived out.



## *Lutheran Schools in Australia*

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unchurched enrollment, is the opportunity for mission and ministry that they provide. They provide avenues through which a local congregation connects to its local community and then serves it by responding to its needs. Pastors and congregations are increasingly taking advantage of the opportunities presented.

- **LIFE**

After years of dependence on North American Lutheran religious education curriculum materials and resources, LCA schools have worked collaboratively to produce LIFE, a Christian Studies curriculum for schools. This curriculum has also attracted interest from other denominational schools. LIFE reflects the need to provide resources that enable the gospel to be communicated to post-modern young people and engages them in serious reflection on religious issues.

- **Public acceptance**

It has often been said that a church, which began in a university, will always value quality education. Certainly Australian Lutheran schools are highly regarded for their standard of education, and enrollments reflect this. In certain areas Lutheran schools are seen as leaders (e.g., indigenous education, technology, and outdoor education).

- **Funding**

Lutheran schools benefit significantly from generous government

funding from both state and federal governments. Government funding provides about 60% of recurrent costs for operating a Lutheran school. With 30% of Australian children educated in non-government schools there is a strong acceptance that parents ought to have the right to have meaningful choice of schools for their children. Public funding of non-government schools is seen not only as a right, but also as a means of enriching Australian education. For each enrolled student, schools receive a per capita grant which is calculated on the basis of the socio-economic needs of the local community. In addition, government building grants, whilst limited, have been vital in supporting the establishment of new schools.

### **Luther Seminary, but No Concordias!**

Luther Seminary is the LCA's sole tertiary institution, and it is charged to provide men and women for the ministries of the Church. However, it has not been able to graduate anywhere near the required graduate teachers for Lutheran schools. Since geographically Australia is the size of mainland USA, it is difficult for a relatively small church to train teachers centrally for schools that are scattered throughout the country. This matter is now receiving urgent attention. The Seminary has entered partnership arrangements with other tertiary institutions (e.g., the Australian Catholic University and a public university) in order to provide teacher

education.

### **How Are Lutheran Schools Being Used For Mission?**

Across Australia many pastors and congregations have caught the vision—at their doorstep in the Lutheran school are unchurched people who are grateful to them for providing quality education. Furthermore, here are people with needs including:

- loneliness due to increased mobility and loss of the extended family;
- assistance with parenting;
- family break-ups and abuse;
- unemployment;
- a general aching and hurting.

God is adding his blessing with young people and their families coming to a relationship with Jesus through Lutheran schools. How can these people be led to a permanent congregational community? A school is not a congregation, despite the fact that school families, experiencing the faith in the context of the school, do regard the school as their “church.” The transitional movement of people from school to congregation has been difficult for many reasons:

- Relationships and experiences of community are developed in the

school;

- The experience of the faith in the school community is often very different from that which is seen in a congregation;
- The school and congregation are geographically separated;
- Some congregations are unwilling and unable to change to meet the needs of the post-moderns;
- Tensions between pastors and principals, and schools and congregations affect clear thinking.

If schools provide such valuable opportunities for mission, then congregations have to be more school friendly. There has to be a seamless community, so that people can move easily from the school community to the congregation community.

If schools provide such valuable opportunities for mission, then congregations have to be more school friendly. This means pastor and people putting time in at

the school and probably creating a worship center at the school. There has to be a seamless community, so that people can move easily from the school community to the congregation community. This calls for sensitivity and flexibility.

### **Why Do Parents Send Their Children To Australian Lutheran Schools?**

It is accepted that some parents seek out the Lutheran school because of a range of non-religious reasons including:

- quality education,
- a caring community for the individual,
- a values-based education,
- good discipline.

However, they soon have the opportunity of understanding that the basis for these qualities is the motivating love of God in Christ. Lutheran schools will always value and strive for quality and excellence in education. We give of our best as we do all to the glory of God. Any educational program that is regarded as being of a high quality will always attract attention and enrollments will follow. In the Lutheran school, the excellence dimension is underpinned by a desire to teach Christ.

There can be tension in families when a child shows interest in Jesus and the family ignores this interest or works to undermine it. This is where prayer and genuine support are required. We also acknowledge that we live in a consumer society, where people shop around and expect to get value for money. Accordingly parents, whether Lutheran or not, tend to be more demanding and less forgiving.

### **Lessons and Conclusions**

Lutheran schools are successful in achieving their mission when they have staff who have a commitment to the unique ethos of the school. There is a

need for educators who model the gospel, witness to their faith, have a Christian world view, and are good teachers. At a time of a general shortage of teachers and a loss of basic esteem for teaching, this is a major task.

Thus one of the biggest challenges facing the LCA is providing teachers and ensuring ongoing theological education, delivered on-line and through a variety of flexible modes. This poses a genuine problem for the LCA, whose tertiary emphasis has been on the pastoral ministry with a minimal teacher preparation program. Can a church have a strong school sector without a strong tertiary sector? There is a need for the LCA to consider how it esteems and designates its teachers.

Clearly Lutheran schools in Australia are at the forefront of the LCA's outreach endeavors into the Australian community. At this time schools provide wonderful opportunities that are being responded to in different and encouraging ways. Lutheran schools have come a long way from simply being nurseries of the church to preserve the faith of the faithful to now being avenues of service and connection with the local community.†

(Further information on Lutheran schooling in Australia can be found at <http://www.lca.org.au/schinfo/for.html>)

## Schools and the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Papua New Guinea

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### **P**ART 1: HISTORICAL OVERVIEW The country and its people

Papua New Guinea is an independent country, encompassing a set of islands which touches the equator in an east-west curve of 1,500 miles, to the immediate north of Australia. Indonesia shares a land boundary to the west, through Irian Jaya province. The islands are part of the Pacific volcanic rim, with mountains up to 15,000 feet, together with some of the highest rainfall areas in the world.

The cultures of the peoples of Papua New Guinea have also been influenced by this physical environment. Because of isolation and ravine, river or mountain barriers—as well as the debilitating effects of endemic tropical diseases and intergroup hostility—the population has been split into over 800 cultural groups, speaking distinct languages. Depending on definition, this is in the order of 20% of the world's total number of languages—spoken by four million people.

The nineteenth and twentieth centuries brought English, German, and Australian exploration and



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annexation to these societies, complementing the neighboring Dutch empire based on Indonesia and western New Guinea. Annexation and formal colonization were replaced by a United Nations protectorate after World War II, administered by Australia. Independence followed in September 1975.

### **The Lutheran Church**

The Lutheran Church's presence, however, had predated Australia's twentieth century incursions. The Church and its schools arrived with German administration in the late nineteenth century. Its schools were mission driven: that is, they were designed to support particular Lutheran perspectives.

The stated purposes of Lutheran schools, with the first classroom established in 1886, were to promote literacy in the vernacular, to assist in reading the Bible, to utilize simple arithmetic, and to adopt good hygiene practices. Girls were also taught sewing, hygiene, and cooking in a practical way. Johann Flierl, Lutheran missionary in Papua New Guinea, in 1907 outlined the essence of church and school relationships. This prescription served as a template for Lutheran

educational endeavor thereafter:

The ideal would be that we get a good teacher into each small district of say about one hundred souls for elementary instruction. If such a village or day school would have only ten to twenty children, the teacher could manage them all the better. From there again the better ones could be chosen to go on to the high school and teacher training. From there we should get the teachers we need as well as catechists or evangelists, in view of

the growth of our work. There is no need for all those who attend the higher schools to become teachers or church workers. People with more education will be an asset to the villages. They can help to further the spiritual

and mental outlook of our people. (Flierl, in Smith, 1987)

From this inspirational but modest beginning, a slow but steady school development began. Post World War I, the Lutheran churches and mission societies of Australia, the United States, and Germany all contributed staff and finance to the program. The system attempted to provide four years of universal education in those areas where the mission was active. By mid-

The stated purposes of Lutheran schools, with the first classroom established in 1886, were to promote literacy in the vernacular, to assist in reading the Bible, to utilize simple arithmetic, and to adopt good hygiene practices.

century—and coincidentally after the traumatic interregnum of Japanese invasion during World War II—20,000 children were in Lutheran community or village schools. This total became 35,000 by 1970, together with agricultural, commercial, and vocational senior schools and four seminaries.

In the meantime, the Church prospered in terms of mission and membership. Papua New Guinea's established churches have reflected a sphere of influence policy, designed to give churches geographic areas of influence, separated from each other. Over one million Lutheran adherents have resulted from this policy, along with similar numbers of Catholics and members of the Uniting Church, which is an association of Protestant churches dominated by variants of Methodism and the London Mission Society.

## **Part 2: A New Era**

Lutheran schools became part of a government supported national network in 1970, when the Church agreed to join the National Education System. The system classified Lutheran schools as Church Agency sponsored, and took over the cost of teachers' salaries entirely, as well as introducing new language (with English the main language of instruction), enrollment, and curriculum requirements. Teachers were also required to have formal and government accredited teaching qualifications, typically through two or three year post-

secondary initial teacher education programs. These were, and still are, offered by Church Agency colleges (the Lutheran Church's national college is Balob, in Lae) for primary/elementary schools and by the national government's university at Goroka for secondary teachers.

Government recognition and support have, therefore, allowed Lutheran schools to be maintained and expand, albeit with some nationally based controls on curriculum and assessment, together with some associated supervision. It should be emphasized, too, that PNG's Constitution recognizes the Christian religion—with the goal that Papua New Guinean men and women should be "responsible and accountable citizens abiding by . . . traditional and Christian values."

The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Papua New Guinea (ELC-PNG) has valued highly its mission school heritage. It sees its schools as a way of supporting its people and their faith development. There is a national Lutheran Education Board (LEB) which has overall responsibility for the Church's schools. The National Educational Secretary, as the Executive Officer of LEB, has a key role to play in working with schools and districts and representing schools to the government. There are also District Education Secretaries who provide on the ground support for schools.

Lutheran schools today therefore reflect both the National Education System and the mission past.

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### **What it Means to Be a Church Agency Within the National Education System**

In 1970, the ELC-PNG, through the LEB, was recognized by the government as an Agency for the delivery of accredited education in Papua New Guinea. Other Agencies included the government itself, the Catholic Church, the Anglican Church, and the Uniting Church. Being an Agency means:

- LEB is responsible for ensuring that Lutheran Agency schools meet all PNG government curriculum requirements.
- All teachers belong to the PNG Unified Teaching System. (They are employed and paid by the state, although each Agency has independence in terms of appointment to “reserve” or principal positions and recommends appointment for other positions.)
- Governance of each school is in the hands of a school board appointed by the local Lutheran community.
- Schools receive from the government 20 kina per year (approximately \$8 U.S.) for community (primary school students) and 350 kina (\$140) for high school students. This is to be used for curriculum materials.
- Accredited church agencies are permitted to operate schools according to their ethos and principles of identity, and are able to give five 30-minute lessons of Christian Religious Education (CRE) per week. Government Agencies are

allowed only one 30-minute lesson of religious instruction per week.

- Annual fees for each student are charged by all Agencies as follows:

Community school: 50 kina (\$20)

High school: 150 kina (\$60).

This money is used to support the schools.

- In addition, Agency fees of 3 kina (\$1.20) for community schools and 15 kina (\$6) for high schools are charged to support the LEB and the development and circulation of CRE materials.

### **Part 3: Questions of Mission and Identity**

Lutheran schools today are part of a network of 2,500 elementary (preparatory and grades 1 and 2) and community (grades 3 through 8) schools administered through national and provincial government regulation. In turn, they are also represented within 230 (grades 9 and 10) secondary/high schools—with total enrollments of over 450,000.

The Church contributes directly to the development of what is still an undeveloped and fragile formal education system, with a relatively low literacy and gross enrollment rate (Table One).

The 1999 General Synod of the ELC-PNG received a report from the LEB, from which the following information is drawn.

**Table One : Indicators of Education Status**  
(1990 Asian Development Bank Figures)

Country	Per Capita GNP (\$)	Literacy Rate (%)	Gross Enrollment Rate (%)		
			Elementary	Secondary	Tertiary
<b>PNG</b>	900	46 <sup>1</sup>	70 <sup>2</sup>	13	2
<b>Indonesia</b>	500	74	118	48	N/A
<b>Philippines</b>	700	86	106	71	28
<b>Malaysia</b>	2,100	73	102	57	7

<sup>1</sup> Of those in paid employment.

<sup>2</sup> Universal primary education continues to be a national goal, as it has been for over 50 years, in comparison with the current participation rate of 75%, at best.

**Table Two : Lutheran Education Statistics—PNG 1999**

Levels of Education	No. of Schools	No. of Teachers	Enrollments
Elementary	105	142	3,114
Primary/Community Schools	205	1,230	30,750
Provincial High Schools	8	215	6,450
Teachers Colleges	1	30	229
Registered CODE Centres	1	15	160
Village Life Centres	4	16	187
Teacher Training Village Life Schools	1	4	0
Pre Schools	1	4	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>326</b>	<b>1,656</b>	<b>40,890</b>

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### **Establishment of Schools**

In 1992, the ELC-PNG had only 185 community schools and 882 teachers. This year, the total is 205 community schools and 1,230 teachers. ELC-PNG has been opening almost four new schools each year since 1992, and about 69 teachers were recruited each year for the same period. Table Two indicates various levels of institutions together with student enrollments and the number of teachers within the ELC-PNG education system.

There is a total enrollment of 6,450 students in all of ELC-PNG high schools, with 215 positions occupied by teachers. At present, 850 grade 10 students will be graduating, with over 45% likely to secure a place in higher education institutions. Lutheran Agency Provincial High Schools do not have any grades 11 and 12. It is hoped that these classes may commence in one or two schools in the near future.

In addition to the above schools, which are Agency schools, the ELC-PNG operates two schools that do not receive government assistance. One of these is Immanuel Lutheran School, a small secondary educational institution located in Lae. Its primary aim is to provide boys who have "dropped out" of the formal education system of the country with a second chance to obtain a recognized secondary qualification.

Most of the students of this school either failed the standard high school examination or were expelled due to

discipline problems. Many such boys end up as criminals or "rascals," members of gangs which terrorize Papua New Guinea's urban areas.

In addition, there is Katharine Lehmann International School in Wau, which was originally established in 1951 to provide Christian primary education for the children of Lutheran missionaries. In 1955, it was handed over to the ELC-PNG, which uses it to provide quality Christian education at the international level. It offers education up to Year 10.

All of this takes place in the tradition that Flierl commenced at the end of the nineteenth century. In 1907, he summed up what he saw as the enduring mission of schools in Papua New Guinea, in particular :

We need teachers and leaders.

Educational theory should be more important than great academic wisdom. The latter is not always identical with the knowledge of how to teach. Hearts, heads or hands will have to be trained in such a school. Our future teachers should learn to use all, heads and hands, and thus make good use of their God-given time and work diligently with their hands. The pupils will have to be gifted, be of good behavior, have had a general elementary education, must be able to read and write, be baptized and know their Bible stories. (Flierl, in Smith, 1987)

It is apparent that the LEB has a

vision for Lutheran schools, and there is intentional strategic planning for the future. Four major goals have been established in the Board (and Church's) national plan, as follows :

1. To develop and implement all educational policies, including those that are directed by the government. However, before implementation, such policies must be relevant to ELC-PNG schools, through testing against St Matthew 28:19-20 and the Church's General Mission Statement.
2. To implement the resolutions of the ELC-PNG Church Council and the Synod on all educational matters directed to this department.
3. To develop and implement those specific curricula that are approved by the ELC-PNG, including CRE in all ELC-PNG schools, and in religious instruction in all other schools.
4. To maintain and improve the high quality of educational standards through an Agency School Inspectorial System, with greater emphasis on efficiency and dedication. This goal includes the

development and provision of both professional and administrative professional development courses for all teachers in all ELC-PNG schools.

#### **Part 4: Concluding Observations**

Analysis of the history of Lutheran schools in Papua New Guinea in the last 25 years suggests that church and school have not always been close and that Lutheran Agency schools have not always had a high Lutheran identity.

This is reflected in the fact that not all principals are

Lutheran, and certainly not all teachers are Lutheran nor even necessarily Christian.

ELC-PNG offices have not always communicated closely with schools.

CRE materials and support from the Church have not been an established priority. There is no centrally accepted CRE curriculum program. This does not assist the Lutheran identity of schools.

It is one thing to say that the Church Agency schools can be operated with a clear Lutheran identity. However, for this to happen there needs to be a formation of teachers. This does not happen easily. The role of Balob Teachers College currently is to offer teacher preparation programs generally,

Lutheran schooling around the world is indeed marked by diversity. . . . but Lutheran education is united in a commitment to valuing education and a belief that "the one thing needful" is knowing the love of God in Jesus Christ.

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not specifically for Lutheran teachers.

### **New Directions**

It is pleasing to note that Christian and religious education are being made a priority. There is an explicit realization that there needs to be a national syllabus, and the project that has been established to achieve this needs to be supported. It is already receiving significant support from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Bavaria.

Central to the new vision is a belief that schools are to be seen as part of the mission of the Church. Provincial and national offices are rationalizing functions so that the provinces and local communities are taking more responsibility for the day-to-day operations of schools. In this way, they will be able to give greater and more appropriate support to schools. In the meantime, there is a clear perception that more remote community schools have not had regular communication from national and provincial school leaders. It is also clear that the LEB has much additional work to do in further basic policy formation, staff "selection criteria," job descriptions, and improving enrollment and staffing systems. It is now clearly acting to support the Lutheran identity of its schools.

In many ways, these tasks seem daunting. The problems and challenges are immense. However, trusting in God's help, school leaders are not overwhelmed, but go forth in faith. The

ELC-PNG has inherited a very significant school system. It is an area that is rich for harvest.

Lutheran schooling around the world is indeed marked by diversity. This diversity is reflected in different relationships and support from government and different levels of resources, but Lutheran education is united in a commitment to valuing education and a belief that "the one thing needful" is knowing the love of God in Jesus Christ.†

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## The Courage to Be a Servant in the Church

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**W**hy is it SO HARD to serve the Church these days? Everywhere I go, Lutheran school teachers and DCEs tell me how discouraged they are. Congregational budgets are not being met; the behavior of Christian school children doesn't seem to be any different from that of public school students; influential members of the parish act like crocodiles; volunteers are difficult to gather; there is always too much work to do and not enough time to do it.

### Our Times

Much of our discouragement in ministry is aggravated by the state of the world in which we live. History continues to show that present-day aspects of the United States are in many ways similar to those found in the Roman empire prior to its fall. Spectacle and orgy dominate our society's entertainments. We don't have the sensations of the Roman baths, but we have talk shows specializing in the bizarre and obscene, a movie industry that rarely lets us enjoy a good story without inserting gratuitous and blatant sexual scenes, and prime time television that flagrantly mocks our morals and insults our intelligence.



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Sexuality is not the only aspect of our culture that mimics that of Rome before its fall. The violence of our entertainments isn't being directed at Christians devoured by lions and slaughtered by gladiators in the Coliseum or set afire as torches to light the Caesar's parties, but the brutality is equally gruesome, the amusements are similarly mind- and compassion-numbing, the victims are analogously marginalized. In such a culture, how can the students in our classes avoid exhibiting violence?

This seems to me to be one major reason for low morale among church workers. We enter our professions because we feel called to use our gifts as teachers to bring the Good News of God's love in Christ Jesus to our neighbors and to incarnate it by reducing the needs, violence, anxiety, and bondage in our world,<sup>1</sup> and yet we discover inevitably that the problems are much larger than local. They are too big for us to affect them.

Hyped by violence, virtual realities, indecencies, and glitz, our students—and even our churches—get entangled in the diversions and consumerism of the world. When the congregation down the street is growing like crazy because it caters to people's whims and hankerings after sensation, we struggle to hold steadfastly to the meaning of the Gospel and its theology of the cross. We can easily give in to our culture's craving for happiness and miss the true Joy of

genuine faithfulness.

Gratefully, we realize that the Bible already warned us to be vigilant against the temptations of our times. The stunning contemporaneity of II Timothy 4:1-5 can give us hope for just such a time. We can also be honored that the text displays the urgency of our calling and thus reminds us that our struggles to be faithful are worthwhile.

### **II Timothy 4:1-5**

*<sup>1</sup>In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I solemnly urge you: <sup>2</sup>proclaim the message; be persistent whether the time is favorable or unfavorable; convince, rebuke, and encourage, with the utmost patience in teaching. <sup>3</sup>For the time [in Greek *kairos*] is coming when people will not put up with sound doctrine, but having itching ears, they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own desires, <sup>4</sup>and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander away to myths. <sup>5</sup>As for you, always be sober, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, carry out your ministry fully.*

This seemingly written-for-the-twenty-first-century picture underscores the importance of knowing our cultural epoch by calling the days when "people will not put up with sound doctrine" a *kairos* time—not merely a chronological

period, but a crisis time, an opportune time, when everything hangs in the balance. Because of the gifts the Church brings to such an era, this is for us, God's servants, a time that intensifies our call to ministry.

Why should it matter so much whether people will stomach healthy doctrine? I think it's especially critical that we who teach recognize how much our culture's inability to digest wholesome dogma is the source of its ills. If people have no sense that there is a truth larger than themselves,

then their own self-interests reign supreme; without ethics the social fabric of society deteriorates—random violence, sexual obscenity, public incivility, rampant greed, and disregard for the common good escalate; without a workable philosophy of life beyond ourselves there is no lasting meaning; without purpose there can be only intensifying passivity and rage that erupts into more violence.

We live in an age without morality, and, as the underpinnings of Christian

truth are evaporating from our culture, we discover to our horror that the culture's ethos also invades Christian communities. For example, evangelical writer Philip Yancey (1998) describes a woman calling herself a "committed

Christian," planning to leave her husband, and also claiming that she rose early "to spend an hour with the Father." When Yancey questioned whether that hour had anything to say about her decision to leave, she responded, "The Father and I are into relationship, not morality. Relationship means being wholly supportive and standing alongside me, not judging" (15).

When churches lose or fail to develop their doctrinal bones, such a disjunction between spirituality and ethics becomes possible. Moreover, parish conflicts escalate since there are no standards larger than personal opinions; the working philosophy of the congregation can easily become mindlessly utilitarian; the lack of genuine mission engenders passivity. Then the members resemble the people described by II Timothy 4, with "itching ears," who "accumulate for themselves teachers to

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suit their own desires” and who “on the one hand turn away from listening to the truth and on the other hand wander away to myths.” The result is a sort of anything-goes religion.

Both sides of that “one hand/other hand” phrase are equally evident and similarly crucial today. “Truth” has been shunned and demoted from modernity’s relativism (“it might be true for you, but not for me”) to postmodern absolute negation (“there is no such thing as truth”). Whatever truth there could be has to be constantly reinvented by each person alone. People think that’s liberating, but it is the false independence of the isolated self, the incohesion of a fragmented *persona* constantly revamped. On the other hand, our increasingly postmodern world specializes in individualistic, personally-concocted amalgamations of assorted beliefs. If, in this cultural ethos, people don’t have any larger story in which to locate their own, then their human psyche has no point of reference, no means to know what matters, so that their personality is endlessly trivialized as it wanders aimlessly among the zillions of myths.

On the one hand, turning away from the truth of God’s transcendent moral authority and, on the other, turning to the myths of our society, people are left with no external moral source—and the result of this, we see in our society, is that “anything goes.” Many of the parents of our students have (usually

subconsciously) adopted this cultural ethos, and their children learn it from them. Since there is no longer a commonly held basis by which to ask moral questions, when we urge the students not to behave in a certain way, they respond without reflection or remorse, “Why not?”

In the midst of such cultural and religious confusion, you and I seek to teach our pupils God’s ways. What resources do we have to negotiate the rapids and avoid the shoals? How do we find the courage even to try?

### **The Trio Which Frees Us to Serve**

The Triune God *always* has hope for us. The II Timothy text gives us a starting point for our difficult work, for the passage proposes a triple source of motivation and meaning. In counterpoint to the culture described in verses 3 and 4, Timothy is solemnly charged in verse 1—as are all who follow Timothy as servants in the Church—to fulfill his calling “in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom.” That trio of “judging,” “appearing,” and “kingdom” graces us with exactly what we need to have courage for our call in these times.

Christ’s judging puts us in our place. His cross eclipses any possibility for pride on our part. We admit that we are not wise enough, strong enough, or courageous enough for the tasks of our

impossible work as Christian teachers. We regret that at times we have blown opportunities for service, mistaken our role, let our own desires deter us from ministry—that we have been lazy or too hurried, cynical or inattentive, petty or nasty. We acknowledge that our moral reasoning has been marred by sin, that our perceptions of others have been judgmental, that our ideas and plans have been too full of self, and that we need God's transcendent wisdom and authority beyond our own. Most of all, we recognize that the root of all our problems is unbelief—we simply don't believe God for who God is; we don't trust God enough.

That is precisely why Christ's "appearing" has to be the middle element of the trio. His judging propels us to our knees in penitence; his first coming drowns our remorse in the flood of his grace. His coming again sets us free from the sorrows of this age, for we know that they are not the last word. Will we ever learn deeply enough how *free* we are to serve in difficult times because of the immensity of God's grace for us in Christ?

The final element of the trio, in view of which Timothy is urged to be faithful, is the "kingdom." It is incredibly important for us to realize that "God's kingdom" was the primary focus in Jesus' teaching. In our present times people often say that God's basic message is love, but the Bible makes clear that for Jesus and the apostles the

key truth, made clear in the Resurrection, is God's rule (see Chilton and McDonald, 1987). It is critical that we understand this, for it affects how we teach—and how we have the courage to keep teaching in these very difficult times.

Too easily the notion that the basic message of Christianity is love can be turned into sentimentalized mush. Even if we keep in mind that the love God offers and commands (*agapé*) is intelligent, purposeful, and always directed to the needs of the other, still "love" does not bring together all that Christianity means.

Look carefully at the parables of Jesus, and you'll notice that a majority of them focus on the meaning of the kingdom. Notice also the declaration in Acts 1:3 that in the forty days between Jesus' resurrection and his ascension his teaching of the disciples focused on God's kingdom. Jesus did not teach the kingdom as some utopian regime; it is instead God's work for our salvation, accomplished in Christ's crucifixion and resurrection, and culminating for the entire cosmos at the end of time.

Moreover, because God is already reigning through Christ, we can respond with Joy, participating co-operatively in what God is doing in the world. This is what gives us the courage to love, no matter how difficult our students!

Jesus' teaching thoroughly shows how God operates in our everyday experience. The parables' ordinary

## *The Courage to Be a Servant in the Church*

images give us hints of the transcendent. They show us that the “mystery” of the kingdom (God’s sometimes-hidden presence, power, and purpose) is constantly being unfolded. Under the surface of even the most mundane things, there lies a deeper reality, a richer possibility.

That is why the biblical emphasis on the kingdom of God is so important for us. As educators and youth workers, musicians and principals, we ought not to be unrealistically optimistic about the people with whom we work, but we don’t need to be pessimistic either. The kingdom of God is both transcendent and relevant.

Therefore, we can be cognizant about human weaknesses and failures, even as we are confident of divine action and hopeful about possibilities of human response.

If we are conscious in our daily life of the kingdom and its glorious goal and present possibilities, this will lead to many consequences in our character and teaching, such as the following:

- Cherishing the kingdom above all else will lead to a penitential

devaluation of every alternative. We will be able to relax our hold on the world’s highest idols, such as money, power, success, fame, leisure, possessions, influence.

- Knowing ourselves as servants of the kingdom will save us from both false pride and false humility. Since God is the giver of all good and perfect gifts, we can’t be arrogant about those apportioned to us, but, since we were endowed with them, we don’t have to pretend we don’t have them.
- Jesus’ reminder that the only way to enter the kingdom is as a little child

constantly calls us to rejoice in the children we serve and to learn from them new beginnings, new repentance and responsiveness, new openness to God. This is my major problem (as it might be yours): I often don’t sense God’s

presence with me because I’m too educated, too burdened with my own importance, too doubtful about his grace in the brokenness of the world and my own life’s struggles, too busy with *my* work simply to be a child. Lord, help my unbelief!

We ought not to be unrealistically optimistic about the people with whom we work, but we don’t need to be pessimistic either. The kingdom of God is both transcendent and relevant. Therefore, we can be cognizant about human weaknesses and failures, even as we are confident of divine action and hopeful about possibilities of human response.

Thinking further about the teachings of Jesus concerning the kingdom makes me aware of several powerful dimensions of God's reign that can encourage us heartily for the tasks of our educational work. These may seem obvious, but I find myself often forgetting them and, consequently, despairing when my work doesn't seem to have the impact I'd hoped it would:

- God's reign is in effect, even when the world seems to be out of his control. The testimony of the whole Bible concerning his cosmic lordship is wonderfully overwhelming if we pay attention to the verbs of God's actions. Kingdom language reminds us to look under the obvious of surface reality to see the hiddenness of deeper truth.
- When the Gospel writers record the preaching of Jesus that "the kingdom of God has come near" (Mk. 1:15), the Greek verb tense they use emphasizes that he has initiated a new stage in God's rule and that it will remain the case because of his constant presence. The Gospel of John captures the same emphasis by putting in the present tense all of Jesus' announcements that if we believe we *have* eternal life—i.e., that our participation in God's kingdom has already begun and will continue into the future. The kingdom has come to us by grace and has welcomed us into its purposes. We never have to work by

our own power or ability, but as channels of God's mercy and love, as persons conveying the good works "prepared beforehand to be our way of life" (Eph. 2:10).

- Even ordinary tasks are edged with splendor when we remember that they are part of the overall work of the kingdom. As Paul invites us, "whether [we] eat or drink, or whatever [we] do, [we] do everything for the glory of God" (I Cor. 10:31). As an old joke declares, it certainly does make a difference in our attitude and ability to keep working whether we envision ourselves as earning our pay, slapping mortar on bricks, or building a cathedral.
- When it seems that our hard work is not bearing any fruit, we can remember that the kingdom of God is "as if someone would scatter seed on the ground, and would sleep and rise night and day, and the seed would sprout and grow, he does not know how. The earth produces of itself, first the stalk, then the head, then the full grain in the head. But when the grain is ripe, at once he goes in with his sickle, because the harvest has come" (Mk. 4:26-29). Kingdom language urges us simply to be faithful in our sowing and not bother ourselves with figuring out what results we are getting.

Recognizing that our calling is an invitation to participate in God's

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kingdom work also changes our choices about what we do and how we do it.

These are a few examples of ways that this underlying purpose affects our regular tasks: (Again, these might seem obvious, but perhaps we need reminding.)

- Our teaching paints for the students a vision of the kingdom of God (Good News!) and invites them to receive its grace.
- Our choices of music and art projects and science experiments and all the other aspects of classroom worship and curriculum reflect the truth, beauty, and goodness of the kingdom.
- We do not teach simply knowledge about God, but welcome the children into participation in what God is doing in the world.

For us to experience the fullness of God's Joy in the midst of the rigors of our work, we who seek to serve the Church and the world beyond constantly need a profound sense of our call to

kingdom work. *In a nutshell, the sense of our call is that God's kingdom captures us, carries us, and cares for us and, in response, we have the privilege of incarnating the kingdom (the reign of God) before others, on behalf of others, sometimes in spite of others, and always with others.* Surely this helps us keep on teaching, even in the face of all the cultural odds against us. God's reign will prevail—let us participate in it with Joy!✠

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1. See a description of *shalom* as the process of ameliorating these four elements in chapter 28 of Marva J. Dawn, *Truly the Community: Romans 12 and How to Be the Church*.

## Leadership Perspectives: Making a Difference with 20/20 Vision

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**T**he Call for Effective Leaders  
The search by business and industry for effective leaders continues to require the attention of companies across the country (Bass, 1985; Bennis & Nanus, 1985). "The need and search for effective leaders in schools is no less intense" (Schmidt, 1992). Lutheran schools covet effective leaders as well.

Each of the last four decades has been marked by attempts to change education in the United States. The decade of the 1960s was one of adoption of innovations without implementation. Educators bounced from one idea to another with no long lasting change. In the 1970s educators backed off large-scale changes. The pendulum swung back to big scale change in the 1980s, as reports such as *A Nation at Risk* (1983) promoted major changes in the American education system. Typically these efforts to change the system misfired. Educators expected a lot but had no mechanisms for making the changes. The era of the 1990s has been marked by dramatic and constant changes. These changes have been large scale with more of a purpose than previous attempts at change. The restructuring of the Chicago public schools is one example of this



large-scale change. Several states have addressed educational reform in the 1990s (Fullan, 1999). The search is on for effective leaders who can manage change in the schools of America.

Change abounds for Lutheran

teachers (see Table 2). Fewer than 40% of the students attending a Lutheran school are members of the operating congregations (Stueber, 1999).

Lutheran school administrators are expected to have 20/20 vision as they meet these changes.

Lutheran churches are searching for leaders who can effectively lead their schools.

Administrators' roles can vary widely from school to school. Expectations are high from boards of directors. Top leaders for these schools are in high demand. Expectations may include visionary

leadership, business leadership, management ability, development skills, communication skills, relationship building skills, and instructional leadership.

In 1994 the Association of Lutheran Secondary Schools (ALSS) identified leadership development as a critical

schools, also. Most elementary schools have a preschool in addition to kindergarten through grade eight. There are 1287 early childhood centers in addition to the 1006 elementary and 71 high schools (see Table 1.) Each calls for an administrative leader. Costs have risen from less than \$900 to over \$2600 per pupil in the average Lutheran elementary school and from about \$1700 to over \$6,000 in the Lutheran high school. Funding has shifted from congregation based to tuition/user fees. A growing number of administrators at the elementary level are female. The church does not certify a growing number of active

**TABLE 1**  
**Number of Lutheran Schools**

	1988-89	1999-2000
<b>Early Childhood Centers</b>	859	1287
<b>Elementary Schools</b>	1044	1006
<b>High Schools</b>	68	71

**TABLE 2**  
**Percentage of Full Time Teachers in Lutheran Schools Certified by the LCMS**

	1988-89	1998-99
<b>Early Childhood Centers</b>	14%	14%
<b>Elementary Schools</b>	74%	63%
<b>High Schools</b>	63%	59%

target in its strategic plan. ALSS was concerned about pending retirements and resurgent interest across the country in starting new Lutheran high schools. This concern resulted in the training of 30 potential leaders and 15 high school administrators with only a few years experience in leadership skills. Fifteen experienced administrators also received training in change management. The call for effective leaders and leadership training remains high on ALSS's list of concerns.

Since the mid-1980s, the elementary administrator's department (LEAD) of the Lutheran Education Association (LEA) has been sponsoring administrators academies. They now offer three different types of academies to accommodate the call for leadership training.

Beginning in 1998, the School Ministry Department of the LCMS initiated a leadership identification, training, and mentoring program for potential new elementary school administrators. By June of 2000, over 75 future leaders completed their preparation through this program.

### **Descriptions of Leadership**

A consultation of effective leaders in Lutheran education met in St. Louis in April 1998 to consider how to identify, equip, and encourage Lutheran school administrators. They identified 10 memorable characteristics of principals: they communicate a vision, display

commitment, mentor others, care, foster a Christian culture, live relationally, show courage, exemplify integrity, understand leadership, and lead spiritually (Grube, 1998).

This school leadership development consultation also identified six common traits of effective principals: they have a diversity of talents, they live Christ-centered lives, they are compassionate, joy-filled, and service-oriented, and they delegate (Grube, 1998).

Dr. Russ Moulds (1999) notes that the leadership of their principal affects new teachers. From 1994 through 1996, Dr. Moulds conducted a series of "Summer Summits" at Concordia University, Seward, Nebraska for new teachers who had completed their first, second, or third year of teaching. He observed that the role of the administrator receives the greatest range of reactions.

The range seems to reflect the several styles of leadership exhibited by administrators. Servant leaders and authoritative leaders (strong in both support and structure) receive consistently high praise. Two kinds of administrators prompt new teachers to consider leaving the teaching ministry or taking a call. One is the administrator who subordinates the well-being of teachers to the pressure of parents, the seniority of peers, or the smooth functioning of the organization. The other is the authoritarian who is high in control and low in personal and

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professional support (Moulds, 1999, p. 210).

Others have added insight into understanding leadership through its definition. Some define it by its characteristics. Some describe leadership as a process of group interactions. Some view it as the behavior of persons in status positions. Leadership may be defined as moving a group to accomplish a goal without using force (Wendell, 1992).

Everyday usage of the phrase “good” or “effective leadership” has even more meanings, but most stress one key point. “Good” leadership moves people in a direction that is genuinely in their real, long-term best interests. It does not march people off a cliff. It does not waste their scarce resources. It does not build up the dark side of their human nature. In this sense, one could say Adolph Hitler displayed strong leadership at times, but obviously not effective leadership (Kotter, 1988, pp. 16-17).

When there is a void in what is perceived to be the leadership needs of the school, the

chances for success as an administrator diminish. The school and the administrator will be seen as unsuccessful. Conflict will usually result. The administrator may be encouraged to retire or move to another position.

### **Characteristics of Effective Leaders**

How would you describe an effective leader of a Lutheran school? Would the staff of a Lutheran school agree with you? Would the students and parents

How would you describe an effective leader of a Lutheran school? Would the staff of a Lutheran school agree with you? Would the students and parents agree with you? If you were looking for a new principal, how would you know you have found an effective leader even before he or she began working in your school? What are the characteristics of an effective leader?

agree with you? How would the board of directors describe an effective leader? If you were looking for a new principal, how would you know you have found an effective leader even before he or she began working in your school?

What are the characteristics of an effective leader?

Effective leaders utilize a team approach to school leadership. They balance management skills with visionary leadership. Effective leaders attempt to diminish bureaucratic and structural constraints on staff (McCoy, 1995).

Effective principals have mastered the principals of cooperation, empowerment, responsibility,

accountability, meaningfulness, and ability-authority. These administrators are more than managers. They are able to articulate and move their schools toward a positive future vision (Sergiovanni, 1987).

Effective leaders demonstrate three types of characteristics. The first type has been called visionary leadership. The remainder of this article will describe characteristics of a visionary leader. In future articles, we will examine servant leadership and spiritual leadership characteristics. Together they describe a leader who can and does make a difference.

### **Visionary Leadership**

What do visionary leaders do? A nationwide study examined the characteristics of 1000 administrators identified by their peers as successful. These successful administrators made the learner their number one priority. They embraced the concept of service to others. They created a positive school climate and worked collaboratively (Wendel, 1996).

Visionary leaders make the success of the learner, service to others, and collaboration integral to their personal mission. They include these as undergirdings of the school's mission and vision. The vision provides the impetus and power to achieve success.

Manasse (1985) describes the visionary leader as one who develops, transmits, and implements a desirable

future for the institution. Batsis (1987) notes that visionary leadership enables others to see how the goals and objectives of the organization fit into the broader structure of the organization. Kouzes and Posner (1984) go a step farther. They note, "Exemplary leaders . . . have visions of what might be, and they believe they can make it happen."

The principal plays the key role in initiating and promoting the school's vision. This organizational vision creates a more unified school culture (school climate) and keeps the school connected to its owners (Lashway, 1997). Research also concludes that managerial leadership is not as essential a factor as visionary leadership in the behavior of principals from high schools that excel (McConnell, 1991). A 1996 study of 37 high schools in New Jersey "supported the idea that the visionary principal has a healthier school climate, engenders greater loyalty to the principal and greater commitment to the organization" (Cuffe, 1996).

Endemann (1990) describes effective managerial leadership as maintaining existing conditions. The most effective leaders are those who are able to create long-term visions for the institution and can communicate that vision. Endemann developed a list of behaviors and characteristics of visionary and managerial leaders. This list is found in Table 3.

By focusing on relationships, the leaders is able to help people work

**Table 3: Behaviors and Characteristics of Two Types of Leaders**

<b>Visionary Leaders</b>	<b>Managerial Leaders</b>
Articulate philosophy and decisions	Talk about daily problems
Talk about future goals and products	Talk about current business activities
Schedule a few crucial appointments	Have a tight, overloaded schedule
Make contact with employees at all levels: management by walking around	Meet formally with immediate subordinates
Work toward consensus	Work toward conformity
Pay attention to strengths	Focus on identifying and correcting weakness
Take risks	Play it safe
Have an action orientation	Have a planning orientation
Are emotional and spiritual, urge employees to bring hearts to work	Are intellectual and rational with reserved, formal responses
Spend time on trust-building activities	Spend time on policies and procedures
Develop fiscal autonomy patterns	Have close fiscal control
Communicate with symbols	Communicate in writing
Tolerate uncertainty and ambiguity	Need certainty and clarity
Simplify ideas using easily understood language	Use complex, technical language to describe ideas
Use symbols and rituals to reinforce and create values	Use symbols and rituals to impress
Use a loose-tight philosophy; tightly controlling core values, allowing individual latitude on implementation	Use a tight or loose control philosophy
Use effective listening skills	Are effective speakers
Use an ad hoc structure for problem solving situations	Use formal committees for problem solving
Generate energy for change	Concerned with stability and calmness

through the “how” questions of life. The goals and vision for the school become more than a saying on a plaque. The vision becomes part of the school community and its being.

The effective Lutheran school administrator takes visionary leadership a step farther. The effective Lutheran school administrator grounds the school philosophy in the Lutheran church’s heritage and teachings. The vision embraces the cross of Christ and reflects the values of Scripture. A visionary Lutheran school leader “sees the primary purpose of leadership as the articulation and implementation of the vision and values within a community which has as its center the message, ministry, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ” (Trafford, 1989).

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Kouzes and Posner (1987) have documented through extensive research five key characteristics of effective visionary leaders. Effective visionary leaders challenge the process, inspire a shared vision, enable others to act, model the way, and encourage the heart.

- **The visionary leader challenges the process.**

There may be more than one way to

reach your desired ends. Alternative ways to an end may enable others to achieve their goals as well. Change is always difficult for a school. The effective leader looks for ways to change, grow, innovate, and improve. The effective leader takes risks and learns from mistakes (Kouzes, 1987).

- **The visionary leader inspires a shared vision.**

Establishing a vision is the easy part. Anyone can set a goal. Motivating others to share in the vision and work toward the goal requires a focus on *how* we do things, not just on *what* we do. Leaders passionately believe they can make a difference. In sports, we often hear about the importance of teamwork. Two teams may have equal talent. Both have set a goal to win the championship. The team with the shared vision almost always wins. A school principal can build a winning team by only employing people with the same vision or by spending time on developing the shared vision (Kouzes, 1987).

- **The visionary leader enables others to act, adding power to the mission.**

In a school this means everyone on

the faculty works to reach the school goals. Those *forced* to act will only act when coerced or watched. Those *enabled* will work toward the goal even when the leader is not present. Collaboration is fostered. The leader gives away power, provides choices, and offers visible support. Which would you rather have, one horse pulling the load up the hill or a team of horses pulling the load up the hill? The visionary leader looks for a team of horses to pull the load (Kouzes, 1987).

- **The visionary leader models the way.**

Not everyone will know how things are to occur in a school. Leaders must behave in ways that are consistent with the values of the school. In most schools we assign mentors to new teachers. A key role of the mentor is to model the way. Mentoring shows the new teacher or student how we achieve our goals. It becomes a road map to the desired ends (Kouzes, 1987).

A passage from a Herman Hesse story (1956) illustrates well this characteristic of the visionary leader:

We set off. Leo went on ahead, and again, as I did many years ago when I watched him and the way he walked, I had to admire him as a good and perfect servant. He walked along the lanes in front of me, nimbly and patiently, indicating the way; he was the perfect guide, the perfect servant at his task, the perfect

official. (p. 83)

- **The visionary leader encourages the heart.**

Along the way to a desired end, it is refreshing to celebrate accomplishments. The teacher who completes a master's degree is acknowledged and rewarded. A master teacher reaches a milestone in service to the school. A student grasps the concepts in physics class. The custodian completes a summer of refinishing floors. Each achievement is an opportunity to celebrate. Each is an opportunity to encourage the heart. The encouragement fuels the soul for bigger and better goals (Kouzes, 1987).

For those who want to assess their ability to be visionary leaders, Kouzes and Posner have developed the Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI), which assesses the five characteristics identified in their research on leadership. The LPI is designed for self assessment as well as feedback from others. Kouzes and Posner also provide helps for a leader wanting to grow in visionary leadership (Kouzes, 1997).

A group of effective Lutheran high school administrators (N=19) participated in a research project using the LPI. They scored high average to above average for each of the five characteristics of a visionary leader (see Figure 3). This inventory is an effective tool for the leader wanting to sharpen his/her 20/20 vision.

### Maintaining a 20/20 Vision

There are two critical ways to maintain the 20/20 vision of the visionary leader. The first is to free administrators from daily tasks periodically. This enables the administrator to engage in meaningful professional growth, attend a workshop, read a book, or visit another school.

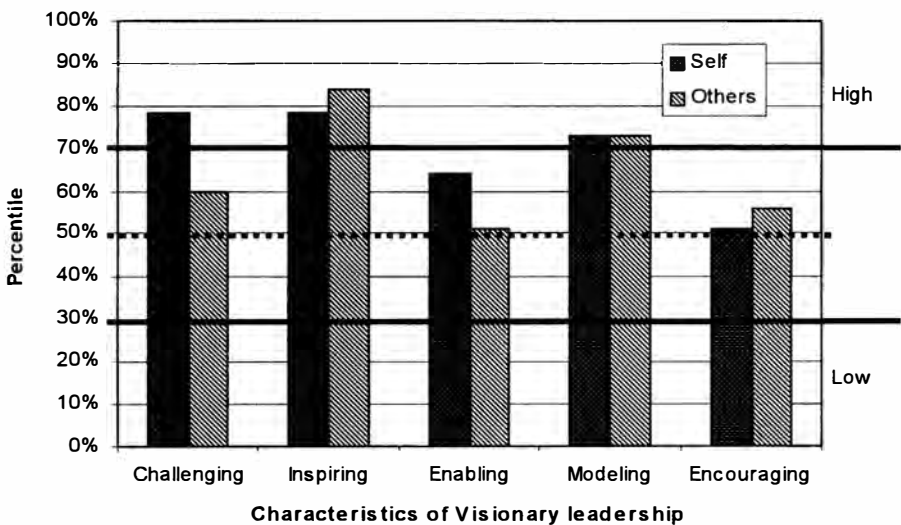
The second is to allow quality time for strategic planning. Such planning includes evaluation of programs and results. It includes establishment of goals and action plans to reach the vision.

The 20/20 vision is maintained as the leader develops qualities of strong core values, goals, a shared vision, innovation, and a focus on a better future. Visionary leaders are “people” oriented. It is crucial that the vision is communicated. Without a people orientation and clear continuous communication, the vision is clouded.

### Conclusion

Forty years ago a group of Wisconsin dairy farmers gathered together each July and August to harvest their grain. The farmers met at a farm with their tractors,

**FIGURE 3**  
**Leadership Practices Inventory Percentile Rankings**  
**of**  
**Effective Lutheran High School Administrators**





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wagons, and pitchforks. The threshing machine was cleaned, oiled, and fueled, and soon the harvest began. Each person innately knew what his or her job was. The goal was to thresh the grain and store the straw and grain for winter use. Servant roles abounded everywhere. Men and boys worked in the fields and barns. Women prepared huge meals every working day. Each day was a new celebration. The principles of visionary and servant leadership were present everywhere. The older men mentored the younger men in each facet of the work. Young women were taught how to plan, cook, and serve the tasty meals.

I remember those long days and the aching muscles. But most of all I remember the people and the ease with which they worked with and for one another. The leaders of this threshing bee understood how to get the task accomplished. They challenged, inspired, enabled, modeled, and encouraged us along the way. A sense of community was everywhere. I looked forward to each day. The process made the threshing bee a great experience. These farmers were extremely effective visionary leaders. It was all about *being*.

Effective leaders are also servant leaders and spiritual leaders. They make a difference for students. The visionary leader makes a difference through 20/20 vision.

A visionary administrator is not afraid of stating, "This is what I believe; this is what the school can accomplish;

and this is where we are going to be in one year, five years, and ten years" (Chance, 1989).†

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## What's the Use?

After ascending to the pulpit one Sunday morning, a preacher announced, "I've got bad news, good news, and bad news. The bad news is that our church roof leaks, and it will cost us \$40,000 to fix it. The good news is that we have enough money to pay for the repairs. The bad news is that the money is still in your wallets."

As administrators and teachers wonder whether their efforts are making a difference in the lives of students, they are in also a bad news, good news, bad news situation. The bad news is that life in the real world for our students is going to be tough. Every thirty seconds of a school day an American child drops out of school; every fifty-eight seconds an American baby is born into poverty; every seven minutes an American child is arrested for a violent crime; every eleven minutes an American child is arrested for a drug offense; every three hours an American child is murdered. It's a rough world out there.

The good news is that Lutheran schools do a wonderful job of preparing students for an uncertain and worrisome future. The students have been nurtured by loving teachers, principals, and pastors. Students graduate from Lutheran schools with great potential. They've been taught the academic skills to adjust to a fast-changing world. They've been taught the values that can help them soar on the wings of eagles, lifted by the updrafts of trust in the Lord.

The bad news is that nurturing and potential don't necessarily translate into well-lived lives. Some of the graduates produced by Lutheran schools will be a part of the above-mentioned statistics. Some of the students will make bad, life-altering decisions. Some students won't reach their potential, or even get close.

It remains one of the frustrations of teachers and administrators that there is not a direct correlation between their efforts on the students' behalf and the apparent impact these efforts have upon the lives of students. All the efforts of the principals and teachers can't guarantee anything. About all their efforts can do is give students opportunities.

Samuel Johnson once wrote, "It is a most mortifying reflection for a man to consider what he has done, compared to what he might have done." Negative attributes like laziness and shortsightedness sometimes seem to dominate the lives of some young people. The opportunities the schools give students are often wasted. Perhaps one reason for this is that the trouble with opportunities is that they usually come disguised as hard work, and some students seem to work hard to avoid hard work.

As the end of the school year draws closer, the lack of motivation in some students becomes more obvious. It becomes increasingly discouraging for administrators to see students waste the time and potential they have. At a time when students should be putting together all the skills and values they've been taught during the school year, many students seem terribly reluctant to demonstrate them. Working as an administrator or teacher can indeed be frustrating. In a world of peaks and valleys, the valleys seem to predominate. Bad news, good news, bad news—the bad news never seems to go away.

But as we know from our study of the Law-Gospel dialectic, God's answer to the bad news of life is the final, resounding message of the Gospel. After all of the "no's" of life comes God's final "yes." After all the ups and downs in the lives of students comes that wondrous piece of news that God loves us. And more than just passively loving us, He interacts with us daily to cement His commitment to us, His children. He continues to work in the lives and hearts of our students when we no longer can.

As the school year ends, we find ourselves in a role similar to that of a

parent whose child has grown and is leaving home to go out on her own. There's not much a parent can say that hasn't already been said. She can only pray that what she's said and done over the years will be taken to heart by the child. In the same way, there's not much more teachers and administrators can say. They simply pray that what they've taught and shown the students will give them what they need.

Being an administrator is a huge burden. Being responsible for preparing young people for their futures is an awesome task. But the Lord gives us assurances along the way that our efforts aren't in vain. Those words from Isaiah 55 that we may have memorized in the old King James Version ring true:

So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth; it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.

So administrators continue to labor, trusting that it's worth it. They know there are few tangible results, but they also know that it's the intangibles that are truly important. Our efforts aren't wasted. There is good news after all.†

## Renewing the Artist Within

How does that saying go? *What are the three best things about being a teacher? June, July, and August.*

As educators we know there is no real down time. "Summer vacation" means a change of focus in our work rather than time off. Perhaps it means time away from students, but most often it means a use of time that ultimately will still benefit our students. A teacher's reaction to the opening attempt at humor quite possibly would be one of defensiveness, trying to dispel the inference of an easy ride professionally. While having the summer "off" certainly would not appear on a teacher's list of reasons why they pursued this vocation, one could contend that the possibility exists for some great things about "being" as a teacher to occur during this interim. So, the next step is to pose the question, "What will *you* do with June, July, and August?"

For teachers of the arts, a whole series of questions manages to surface. The overriding answer to recall is why you chose to pursue the arts as your teaching specialty in the first place. How often do you remind yourself of the joys of music-making, the indescribable experience of expressing yourself through character acting or painting, the physical exhilaration of dancing or sculpting, the sense of accomplishment when the audience applauds or the curtain closes, shared memories of fellow ensemble members, the realization of your God-given artistic abilities in whatever form they take? When was the last time you stepped out of the leader/director role and reconnected with the performer, dancer, actor, or creator you had been?

It is important—dare it be said, necessary—for anyone in arts education to continue to create. How can you better nurture your own students as artists than by such things as remembering what the ensemble experience is like through playing or singing again. When did you last have to follow a conductor, take direction in a play, or recreate the movement ideas of a choreographer? And so the questions continue to unfold.

What *can* you do with June July, and August? There are community arts groups everywhere. Play again, sing again, act again, dance again. Better still, try something artistic you have not done before. How beneficial to a conductor to learn about dancing. Allowing yourself to be physically expressive, to move to music, will improve the gestures you use with your ensemble, will increase awareness of self, will be great exercise, and will be *fun*! If you

## Educating the Whole Child

by Jean Harrison

teach drama, the stage beckons. Summer theater is the place to rediscover acting. Of course, those community theater groups would love to have the extra help backstage as well. This gives you the chance to meet new people, discover hidden talents, be a part of an artistic perspective other than your own, *and* be someplace where your abilities are needed and valued. If you don't teach drama, all the more reason to go for that audition! Painters, dancers, and singers can be just as adept at set building, lighting, and costumes as the theater people—and they can land a role in the play as well.

If you play or sing, then find a teacher and take some lessons. Invest in some new solo repertoire and practice! Music teachers are constantly telling students of the necessity to practice—when did you last work on your scales or sight reading? You, too, can find a community group to join—especially you tenors and basses. Watch how happily you'll be received into almost any vocal ensemble. Summer is the time many church musicians are looking for soloists for worship. Polish some appropriate repertoire and volunteer. If you are the church musician, then find a substitute for a week or two and take the opportunity to rejoin the congregation. You'll be amazed at the effect that a change once in a while will have on you and your music making.

Go to the museum! These places are not just for tourists and school field trips. Spend time and really look. Look for

brush strokes, ponder color and light, imagine yourself in the work. What would be the next move if the sculpture came to life? Write a poem as you sit in the gallery. How would you describe what you see? Why did the artist give it that name?

Summer is a great time for fairs and festivals. Have you ever been to a drum and bugle corps competition? How about Scottish Highland Games, a Native American pow-wow, a shaped-note sing, bluegrass or jazz festivals, gospel or folk festivals, Shakespeare in the park, dancing under the stars, or hoedowns? Do not forget time quietly spent on a walk, in a park, looking at the sky, smelling the flowers, or floating on the water either.

Quiet is an essential part of all the arts. In music, silence is as important as sound; in theater the pause is dramatic; in dance, momentum must balance with repose. Most of all, silence must be part of prayer. When we are silent we can best hear the voice of God.

None of these suggestions are for credit or part of degree completion. Most are free or at minimal expense. All provide opportunity for you to reconnect with the artist inside. All are teacher enhancing, human enhancing, and life enhancing. Give yourself the opportunity to be expressive, to create, to surround yourself with beauty. Travel with your heart and mind beyond the limitations of words to make June, July, and August priceless. Then return in September and share those gifts with your students.†

## Passion in Ministry

"Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord" (Romans 12:11 *NIV*)

God desires His people to serve Him with zeal and passion. Passion unlocks the door to accomplishing great things for our Lord. Passion reveals our love and vision for ministry; it reflects our excitement and energy as we respond to His call and the touch of His Spirit. What is your passion? What drives you and keeps you committed to ministry? What is at the core of your heart? These questions may reveal more about you and your ministry than any others.

### **The Beginning: The Gift of Passion by God**

May of 1969. I had finally made it through confirmation instruction. I was 13 years old. The next move was to experience our church youth group. The youth ministry was run by volunteers in their early 20s. They had an infectious excitement for bringing kids into community. Although I do not remember what we did that first night, I will never forget the impression it left on me. Upon arriving home that evening, I clearly remember announcing to my parents what I was going to do with the rest of my life. My statement was something like, "I want to do what those adults up front were doing." I really had no idea what I was saying, but in my heart I knew God had set my direction and stirred a passion in me that has carried me in youth ministry for 32 years. Those first 19 years I served as a lay person and the following 13 years as a Director of Christian Education.

Passion for ministry is not something to be manufactured; it is a spiritual touch from God. It is God's calling to a faith-filled life: being "hot" for God. King David had a passion for God, being a man after God's own heart. David's passion for serving only God was evident throughout his reign. Other Biblical characters who exhibited great passion were King Josiah, Nehemiah, and the disciples. King Josiah, upon hearing the Word of God for the first time in his life, passionately took on the entire religious movement of his day, restoring worship to the temple. Nehemiah received a passion from God to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem in the midst of adversity. The disciples, after receiving the Holy Spirit, became flames of passion—their lives were dramatically changed.

Passion is God-given.

## **The Nature of Passion**

Dr. John Maxwell defines passion as an "intense emotion compelling action." He further defines it as "a strong devotion to some object, activity, or concept." A passionate person:

- is goal oriented,
- is a self-starter,
- has a positive optimistic attitude,
- gives 100% all the time,
- strives for excellence,
- isn't satisfied with mediocrity,
- is creative at getting things done well, no matter what,
- has a "whatever it takes" attitude,
- accepts responsibility,
- doesn't make excuses or shift blame,
- believes in people,
- inspires others to do their best, and
- rises to leadership.

Passion is the God-given, driving force that allows us to accomplish great things for Him. Whether you are a pastor, teacher, director of Christian education, parish worker, or volunteer, if you are in ministry your desire is to achieve something great for God. God gave me a passion for youth ministry. Hence, my greatest personal achievement in ministry had been nurturing the faith development of youth in my church. The passion God gave me for this ministry drives the activities, conversation, and community of our youth ministry. To achieve great things for our Lord begins with the first step.

## **Claim the Passion**

The first step to doing great things for God is personal motivation. Maxwell

teaches that intense desire brings great results and that weak desires bring weak results. He uses the metaphor of a fire to explain this principle: "A small amount of fire makes a small amount of heat." The corollary is, "If you find yourself lacking in persistence, this weakness may be remedied by building a stronger fire under your desires."

A passionate person has the willpower to accomplish the tasks ahead and is not easily derailed by others. Passion changes people. It directs priorities, vision, goals, how we direct our energy and use our time. Passion drives us toward accomplishing the work God places before us.

Another way to look at passion is to view its antithesis, which is apathy. The word "apathy" is formed from the prefix *a-*, "without," and the root *pathos*, "passion,"—no love. An apathetic person is one who lacks passion, one who does nothing, one who has no goals, desires, or vision. When passion wanes, we must move to the second step, which is to reclaim the passion.

## **Reclaim the Passion**

A drowning person is in need of a life-raft, and for those lacking passion, God becomes that life-raft. We can ask God, who gives good gifts to His people, to reignite us with the Holy Spirit, to fill us once again with passion: that burning desire for ministry. As God sets before each of us the work that He has called us to do, we can then rely on Him to provide the passion, desire, and fire to accomplish that work.

Interestingly, we might be the ones



who are preventing that passion from igniting us. To discover ways we may be stamping out the embers of passion, we need to ask ourselves some tough questions, such as, what in my life might be quenching the passion of the Holy Spirit? What sin am I holding on to which I need to confess and release to God? Whom do I need to forgive?

All that God has given us is ultimately for someone else. Even passion for ministry is given to excite others for Jesus. God wants passionate Christians. "God who gave Himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are His very own, eager (Greek = zealous) to do what is good" (Titus 2:14). "Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord" (Romans 12:11). God desires His people to do the good works He has prepared for them, with zeal and passion, with eagerness to serve the Lord.

### **Identify, Develop, and Use Your Spiritual Gifts**

Another way to reclaim the passion is to identify, develop, and use the spiritual gifts God has given us for ministry. Our passion flows from the gifts God has blessed us with. God has gifted each of His children so they can be a blessing to others. Using these gifts helps us focus on a vision and set the goals to accomplish this vision. Passion fuels the fire, excites the soul, and brings

energy to the task.

Passion is a gift from God. What we do with that passion is an expression of our faith. Passion motivates us to do great things for God. Yes, at times we struggle and our passion needs fueling. Our prayer might be, "God, empower me to be passionate for the ministry of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Fill me with passion for the work you have called me to. May this passion result in the building of your kingdom."

### **A Prayer for Passion**

In closing, let me leave you with the following picture of a passion-filled servant of our Lord, shared by that great teacher of passion in the ministry, Dr. John Maxwell: "An old Mississippi preacher believed, in his bones, that the Word of God was a two-edged sword. One Sunday morning, he mounted the pulpit and prayed, 'Oh Lord, give thy servant this mornin' the eyes of the eagle and the wisdom of the owl, illuminate my brow with the Sun of Heaven, possess my mind with love for the people, turpentine my imagination, grease my lips, electrify my brain with the lightning of the Word, fill me plumb full of the dynamite of Thy glory, anoint me all over with the kerosene of salvation, and set me on fire. Amen.'" May that be our prayer also.†

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## Good News.COM

"Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John,  
They are the Gospels it is true;  
But the Gospel most folks read  
Is the Gospel according to you."

That's what our ministry is all about! Celebrating and sharing the good news of Jesus Christ each day—anywhere, anytime, anyplace!

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Let's look at each of these more specifically:

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2. **Good News.COMmunity.**

We are God's "Holy Huddle," His "Shalom Zone," His "Grace Place," His "Friendly Flock." We need each other. In our classrooms, staffs, families, and congregations we celebrate the good news; not in a vacuum but with other people whom God has placed around us. Our task is simply and intentionally to celebrate and share the good news of Christ in our community context.

3. **Good News.COMpassion.**

Isn't it great to know that the Lord looks upon us "with compassionate eyes"? And we look upon others in the same way. Through focusing on the cross and the resurrection we have "cross eyes" to reach out with the Good News of love and forgiveness to the hurting and the forgotten and to those who think they have been forsaken.

4. **Good News.COMmission.**

As ministers of the Good News through our Baptism in Christ,

## *Multiplying Ministries*

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we are all commissioned to speak and act in the name of the Lord Jesus to those around us. God has commissioned all of us—the nursery school child, the young adolescent, the middle aged, and even us old folks—to be committed to communicating to the community, with compassion, the commission that our

Lord gives to all of us!

So, blessings as you share the “Good News.Com.” Our common task is to share the Good News of Christ to those whom God has placed around us.

That’s what it’s all about! Celebrate the “Good News.Com.” Today!†

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### **Writing for the Church Workshops**

The Editorial Division of Concordia Publishing House (CPH) in cooperation with Concordia Seminary, Ft. Wayne, IN, and Concordia University, CA, will offer its popular “Writing for the Church” workshops this summer at Concordia Seminary, Ft. Wayne, IN (July 16-22, 2000) and Concordia University, Irvine, CA (June 25-July 1, 2000). Both workshops will be led by Dr. Earl Gaulke, Vice-President Emeritus, CPH editorial division, and Dr. Rodney Rathman, Editor of Day and Midweek School materials.

Workshop objectives include helping participants to know the elements of effective written communication, recognize the need for effective written communication *in* the church and *by* the church *for* the world, develop creative writing and editing skills through regular practice, and commit themselves to witnessing through the written word as they communicate the Good News of grace and forgiveness in Jesus Christ. Areas to be covered include the writing of religion lesson materials for all levels and agencies of Christian education, feature and news articles, devotional literature, family and children’s literature, and audio and video scripts.

For additional information on fees and credits or to obtain an application form, write to Earl Gaulke, CPH, 3558 S. Jefferson Ave., St. Louis, MO 63118 or write directly to Writing for the Church Workshop, Dr. William Weinrich, Concordia Theological Seminary, 6600 N. Clinton St., Ft. Wayne, IN 46825 (Phone: 219/452-2103; Fax 219/452-2121) or Writing for the Church Workshop, Lindsay Gallacher, Concordia University, 1530 Concordia West, Irvine, CA 92612 (Phone: 714/854-8002; Fax 714/854-6854; e-mail: [gallacherl@cui.edu](mailto:gallacherl@cui.edu)). Enrollment for each workshop will be limited to 20 participants.

## From the Lips of Children

Kids say the darndest things. Those of you old enough to remember Art Linkletter recognize that sentence as one he used often, making it into a television show and a book title. We can always count on children to say something or ask a question without editing either the words or the message. Sometimes their honesty is refreshing. At other times, it's simply embarrassing.

The candor of children has led to another truism: "out of the mouths of babes . . ." This expression, too, implies the inability of children to edit what they say into the social niceties of the culture.

The implication in each of these phrases is that children's statements are not at the standards of adult communication. That children say embarrassing things. That children don't understand the rules of social interaction.

### The Praise of Children

But that's not the message of the Bible. In the Psalms, David cites the praise of children—children and infants—as the standard for praise. Psalm 8 refers to the praise of children and infants as more than praise, in fact. The word for praise can also be translated *strength*.

What an interesting concept! The words of children and infants are ordained by God to have strength? What might this mean? Where does that strength come from? What is its purpose?

The gospel of Matthew sheds light on this question. In the account of Jesus driving the money changers out of the temple, Jesus quotes Psalm 8. He has just left the temple and is healing the blind and the lame. This makes the religious leaders indignant. The final straw, it appears, is the fact that children are in the temple area, shouting praises to Jesus.

I picture a rather busy scene. People trying to get close enough to Jesus to be touched and healed. The remnants of the money changers gathering up their sacrificial animals and their bags of money. Children shouting praises to Jesus. Children engaging in a lively "parade" around Jesus and His followers. Noise. Confusion!

### Confusion and Clarity

Into this confusion steps Jesus. He responds to the indignance of the religious leaders by quoting a psalm they undoubtedly knew. He meets their anger with a portion of a psalm of praise. And, worst of all in their eyes, He picks out the piece that refers to *children*!

The psalm refers not only to children but also to infants. What a state of affairs! Adding infants to the mix takes all the ambiguity out of the message. This obviously must mean very young children.

Didn't Jesus know that kids say the darndest things? What would make Him think that *children*—children and *infants*—could sing praises?

Do we react any differently now?

People still get indignant if there is too much kid noise in worship. People are still creating programs and services to take or to keep children out of the temple. Away from worship.

People still question the worth of the worship of young children. People still assume that children should be in child-size programs until they are old enough to participate in worship without disturbing anyone else.

### What's the Point?

But that's not what Jesus says in Matthew. He quotes an Old Testament psalm of praise as defense for children's presence in the temple court, responding to the priests' and rabbis' indignance with a quiet quotation of their own scriptures.

"Do you hear what the children are saying?" they ask, no doubt expecting an immediate apology with a promise to quiet or remove the children.

Does any of this sound familiar? We still hear the same question. "Do you hear what the children are saying?" And we need to give the same answer. "From the lips of children and infants You have ordained praise."

This is a whole lot more than mere tolerance of children's presence for praise. This is downright encouragement!

### So Now What?

Just as Jesus encouraged the participation of children in praise, so must

we. Just as Jesus defended their right to be present in the temple area, so must we.

But their presence is only the beginning. Children need to be coached into worship, to be taught the meaning of symbols and rituals. They need to be welcomed by the *entire* worshiping body. They need to know and feel that they are valued for who they are right now, not simply for who they will become.

Our baptismal theology teaches that children are members from the day of baptism. Do we treat them that way? Or are they invisible to us until they can read the hymns and imitate adult worship?

### Putting Actions to the Words

My current goal is to greet each child under five by name as I leave worship each Sunday. I try to talk to children even before greeting their parents.

I also believe we should work toward a worship space that looks like young children are expected and welcomed. That might mean booster seats to place on pews for better sight lines for toddlers. It might mean picture Bibles for toddlers and preschoolers to give them more to focus on. It might mean identifying words to listen for in the sermon so that preschool and primary children learn to listen for key ideas.

An attitude of welcome will mean different things in different settings, but in most settings it will require changes that increase the likelihood that children and their parents feel welcome and welcomed.

So how is it with you and your congregation? Are the lips of children and infants singing praise with the rest of the congregation?†

# A Final Word

by George C. Heider, President, Concordia University

## We Have So Much to Learn

It happens so often as to be commonplace: students taking a foreign language for the first time will say to their teacher that only now do they understand English grammar. Or they'll come to a new appreciation of the variegated shades of meaning in a word, once they consider the range of terms which overlap that semantic field (as, for example, in the several Greek words for love). They may even, eventually, come to realize the unique resources of their native tongue, once they see the ways in which other languages can convey nuances which cannot be reproduced in translation. For this reason alone, I would argue, second-language instruction in primary, secondary, and "higher" education is of great benefit, and its widespread decline in American education is unspeakable folly. But I digress: curricular design is another day's axe to grind.

Rather, I would lift our sights even higher. What language study can do for the understanding of one's own language, international study does for the appreciation of the greater culture. In part, I make this claim from personal experience: though hardly a globe-trotter, I can fairly say that I have never traveled overseas without returning in some way transformed and more reflective about life in the United States. Some lessons learned this way have been positive, for example, the degree of personal freedom known among us. Other points have reflected less well on Americans and our culture. During a trip to the Czech Republic last October, for example, our host took me and a colleague to a series of Friday evening meetings of youth for Bible study and Christian reflection. It struck me powerfully how rare such gatherings are among us—to our loss.

For this reason alone, I'm more than delighted when I hear of a student taking her deaconess internship in Russia or doing his student teaching in Hong Kong or signing up for the Concordias' semester-abroad program in London each fall. We have so much to learn, including learnings about ourselves. From a humanistic perspective, we have here a powerful educational argument for "diversity" on an international scale.

For the Christian educator, however, self-knowledge is only the beginning of the advantages of exposure to life beyond our nation's borders. As our own nation resembles ever more closely a stew than the traditional "melting pot," the lessons learned abroad can directly inform our witness to Christ nearer to home. They can free us from our implicit assumptions which threaten to re-create Him in our own image. They can free us to share Him with those unlike us as the one who brought ultimate dignity and worth to our common humanity through His incarnation. But first we have to dare the different. †

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## Next Year in *Lutheran Education*: Format and Publication Changes

Beginning in fall of 2000, *Lutheran Education* will shift from publishing five times annually (every other month during the academic year) to a quarterly publication cycle: Issues of the journal will appear Fall (October), Winter (before Christmas), Spring (near Easter), and Summer (at the end of the school year). The total amount of content of the journal will increase slightly as we move from five issues of 60 pages each (300 pages annually) to four quarterly issues of 80 pages each (320 pages annually). The new format will allow for slightly longer and more substantive articles and for the reintroduction of a book review section, with review essays introducing readers to important books in the various fields of Lutheran education and addressing key issues currently being debated in these fields.

Each issue will also include a space entitled "LE Forum" in which to feature selected responses to articles in the previous issue, allowing for thoughtful, reasoned response and enable differing viewpoints to be heard. The journal will remain in its current 6 by 9 inch format, but it is hoped that the shift to quarterly publication will allow the look and feel of the journal to be upgraded.